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[For information on chiefs appointed by the Spanish, see Category 643.]

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
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The Chief and His Household

Modern improvements have not been carried so far among them as to furnish the convenience of bells, such as are used to call waiters in our fashionable hotels, but as a substitute mine host of the wigwam had tied a deerskin cord to the corner of each of his wive's buffalo mattresses, the other end extending under the canvas into his own tent, thus rendering only a slight twitch necessary to communicate intelligence their presence was required. It was their duty to attend him, come at his call and go at his bidding, standing towards him as much in the relation of slaves as of wives.

He was the civil chief as distinguished from the war chief, and consequently the head of the tribe. This dignity carried with it the privilege of possessing four wives, a common Indian being allowed to have but one, subordinate officers two, and the war chief three. His name was Osolo, which, translated into Anglo Saxon, signifies "the Big Wolf." He had eight children, four of whom still remained in their mothers' tents, two had grown to manhood and taken wives to themselves, while two daughters had likewise left the paternal wigwam for the matrimonial lodge.

I had an opportunity now of observing their manner of preparing and partaking breakfast, which certainly was not attended with an extraordinary ceremony or display. Outside the tent, in front of the door, two logs lay side by side. Between them the fire was kindled. A long slice of horseflesh was attached to the end of a stick, some four feet in length, by which the meat was held over the fire, and when barely warmed through was brought into the tent, the handle end of the stick thrust into the ground, the long slice dangling from the other end, resembling a drooping blood-red flag. Kiln-dried corn was next boiled and mashed and served in a large dish made of bark. Breakfast was then

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understand. It was brief—unusually so—and terminated without any damage, very much to my relief.

After the ceremony, I was conducted to the tent of one of the Spotted Leopard's wives, of whom he also had four. This was especially appropriated to the accommodation of Big Wolf, and inasmuch as I had always slept in the same tent with him at home, he did not think proper to alter the programme on this occasion.

In the morning, a large number of mules and horses were collected in the square, driven in from the surrounding pasture by the women. Piles of buffalo, deer, and beaver skins, also, were brought from the tents and packed on mules. I was then brought out by Big Wolf, who produced the bloody stick and delivered it to the Spotted Leopard, at the same time informing me I had been sold and assigned. To render the transfer legal, however, it became incumbent on me to reopen the vein on the back of my hand, and again stain the carved figures with blood, an act which, in view of the alternative of being butchered, I performed with great alacrity. This formality closed the bargain, when Big Wolf and his warriors departed, taking with them the avails of the sale. In this business transaction, I had the satisfaction of learning how much, in Indian estimation, I was worth, to wit: 120 animals, old and young, of the horse kind, and as many skins as three pack mules could carry.

From the first I entertained an inveterate dislike of the Spotted Leopard. He was morose, reserved, unsocial, and there was a malignant expression about his mouth and eyes that told me as plainly as if it had been written in emphatic English on his forehead that he was a being who would delight in cruelty. These were my first impressions of him, and I never had occasion to modify them afterwards. But

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among his wives, there was one who treated me with all the kindness I had previously received at the hands of Moko, the young consort of the Big Wolf, and she was *Kianceta*, the Weasel.

At the end of four days, Big Wolf again made his appearance, attended by his four wives and a number of warriors. Their arrival was celebrated by a pipe dance. This ceremony was conducted as follows: The wives of the two chiefs, myself, and several old men of the tribe were stationed in the center of the ring. At its side stood the Spotted Leopard, with a lighted pipe made of red sandstone. As the warriors danced around, each, as he came opposite the chief, received the pipe at his hands, took a whiff or two, and handed it back. This ceremony was accompanied by one of their wild and peculiar songs, and when it was concluded, Moko came forward with the watch, kissed it, presented it to me, and turning about, broke through the circle of warriors, crying, and disappeared in a neighboring tent.

I caused it to sound the alarm, probably a dozen times, when the Spotted Leopard approached me with Kianceta by his side. Into the possession of the latter, the weird, mysterious thing, through which the Great Spirit spoke in a strange voice, was delivered, and the crowd dispersed.

Kianceta, the Weasel, was tall and slim, and erect as the young cedar that grew on the bank of the Boge Lescoha. She had an easy and elastic gait, as if shod with velvet springs, and in her movements there was a nameless grace and dignity which drew all eyes after her, as the magnet attracts the steel. She was dressed in buckskin moccasins, and leggins colored red—a blue broadcloth skirt, tastefully embroidered with beads, and over this a bright calico short gown—articles obtained from the Mexican traders. Her long hair, blacker than the feathers of the crow, fell down

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224 into a still wider prairie—and there, at a watering place, pitched our camp. Here we remained two months, meeting with unanticipated success. Thousands and thousands of buffalo, in immense droves, were roving over the plain, and it was an easy task to obtain as many hides as the mules could carry home.

484 574 622 [559] On the return, which was by a different route from that we came, we fell in with a party of two or three hundred, a friendly tribe, who accompanied us back to the camp. Their chief was Kan-sa-le-um-ko, the Rolling Thunder. He was agreeable, though sedate—a compound of benign dignity and solemnity—a chief who plainly preferred falling on his face before the prophet, in the time of the new moon, to dancing the war dance with the warriors.

574 [622] The Rolling Thunder and his tribe remained with us a week, and it was, indeed, a week of carnival and merriment. First of all was the war dance, and then followed the solemn discourses of Che-ra-se-chick-a-lo, the prophet, and after them came the ring dance and the pipe dance, and the feast of the roasted dog. During these entertainments, the good Kianceta and myself played a conspicuous part in the exhibition of the watch. As on all former occasions, it captivated the simple children of nature, and particularly the Rolling Thunder, whose reverent temperament led him to refer all mysteries, whether great or small, to the wonder-working power of the Great Spirit.

574 129 Soon after the departure of Rolling Thunder and his people came another large party and pitched their hunting tents on the bank of the stream, outside the town. The day following their arrival, I observed our warriors, belted, and decorated with trinkets and scalps, moving towards their encampment. Something unusual, I felt confident, was about to take place. Distant but a quarter of a mile, I

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viously crossed, and after a journey of several days, at length entered a large town of, perhaps, two hundred tents, situated in a narrow, but luxuriant valley, over which the thoughtful and sedate Rolling Thunder had the honor to preside. On our arrival, the customary dances were duly performed—the bloody covenant of the square stick was solemnly renewed—the purchase money, consisting of skins and animals, was delivered in due form of savage law—and Kianceta, the Weasel, having braided into my long hair an incredible number of beads, as a parting token of friendship and affection, the Spotted Leopard, followed by his attendants, disappeared from my sight, thank God, forever.

The price paid for me on this occasion, so far as I could judge, exceeded even the price paid on the former sale; my value, in connection with the watch, bearing somewhat the same proportion to that of other, less fortunate captives, as the value of such trotting celebrities as "Ethan Allen," "Flora Temple," and "The Spirit of the Times" does in that of ordinary nags.

A description of one Indian village is, substantially, a description of all others. The same fashion of tents, the same regularity of streets, the same square in the center, characterize them all. The village of Rolling Thunder was situated in a more contracted valley than that of Big Wolf's or the Spotted Leopard's; in other respects it was the same. He had not neglected to take advantage of the privilege apertaining to his patriarchal office; consequently, he, likewise, had gathered into his tents four conjugal companions, whose euphonical names I here mention in the order of their ages. They were *So-waw*, *An-a-wak-ke-o*, *Ho-wawk-ke-no*, and *Se-ma-naw*, the Wise. The latter took charge of the watch, preserving it with all the care and tenderness that had distinguished her illustrious predecessors, Moko and Kianceta, the Weasel.

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157 624 551 Se-ma-naw, the youngest wife of the civil chief, possessed a cheerful and lively disposition, always frolicsome as the young antelope of the prairie. She was the daughter of the war chief of the tribe, *Sa-was-saw*, the Bear, and niece of An-a-wak-ke-o, who was her father's sister. The name of the prophet was *Han-na-nos-ka-a*, signifying the wisest of the wise.

622 157 The Rolling Thunder possessed a remarkably inquisitive mind, and was, moreover, extremely sociable. In the course of his life, he had several times crossed the borders of the Indian territory into Mexico, and had some faint notions of civilization—just enough to excite his curiosity. Hour after hour he would converse with me in his tent about the manners and customs of the whites. On these occasions, I endeavored to illustrate, in the best possible manner, their superiority and power. With a piece of charcoal, I would sketch on a sheet of birch bark the figure of a ship, "with wings whiter than a swan's and wider than many eagles"—its masts taller than the tallest cedar on the mountains—representing it as capable of carrying more than a thousand pack mules could bear; that in this great canoe, the white man would sail away over the salt water, beyond the sight of land, to a vast continent, distant more than a hundred days' journey to the east. He had never seen the [173] ocean; nevertheless, he comprehended its vastness through the traditions of his fathers, who once dwelt upon its shore; but no logic could convince him that the mighty land beyond it was a part of this globe; his reasoning leading him irresistably to the conclusion that it must necessarily belong 823 to another planet. When I told him the earth was round like a ball, and on the opposite side were extensive countries and millions of people—that if we could bore a hole through it directly beneath our feet, we would emerge into

The Comanches

The family headmen - and there was at least one for each group -
622 were the peace, or civil, chiefs. When the large band was functioning
623 as a unit, it contained several peace chiefs, one of whom was recognized as the head chief of the band. The rest formed an advisory council to the leader and at the same time maintained their positions as family headmen.

184 Although the various bands had cultures so similar that it was
619 extremely difficult for the uninitiated to differentiate among them,
621 each band had certain peculiarities which served to identify its members in any company. Each had its favorite dance.[10] One band habitually made clothing from antelope skins, although the others preferred deer skins. One made no pemmican, another made it without berries, and a third always added berries.[11] The southern groups were thought to prefer darker clothing than their northern kinsmen.[12] There were also slight differences in speech. For instance, the Wasp band members (Southern Comanche) pronounced their words more slowly than the Antelope band of the Staked Plains.[13] Bands also differed in a number of cultural aspects less easily recognized, such as magical techniques, sexual attitudes, and character traits. Cultural differences persisted, although it was mandatory upon an individual to follow the customs of the group with which he lived in order to be socially accepted by his new associates, and this despite the frequent exchange of band allegiance and the interband marriages. The extent of cultural differences at present corresponds somewhat to that in the United States between North and South or East and West. All the older Comanche informants were as conscious of the differences as a Texan in Boston. "That was —— [name of band] way" was a very common reply of informants to questions or comments. Notwithstanding these and other slight differences that may have existed, there was, on the whole, little gross variation in habits, customs, and institutions.

174 Only the larger bands received permanent recognition and a name.
619 Before the close of the eighteenth century, the Spaniards in New

[10] R. H. Lowie, "Dances and Societies of the Plains Shoshone," American Museum of Natural History *Anthropological Papers*, XI, Part 10 (1916), 809–12.

[11] Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, 221.

[12] W. B. Parker, *Notes Taken During the Expedition Commanded by Captain R. B. Marcy Through Unexplored Texas, in the Summer and Fall of 1854*, 202.

[13] Richardson, *The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement*, 17–18.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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671 with Polynesians and Comanches illustrates this: Polynesians can give you practically an Emily Post statement of what proper behavior should be on all occasions, whereas Comanches, when asked how they do anything, immediately answer, 'Well, that depends.' They genuinely think of behavior as a range of unlimited, individual, freedom of choice, although when you take a series of examples of behavior, as Hoebel did, you actually find quite a high degree of uniformity. But you have to check Comanche behavior to arrive at this."[1]

In other words, to learn about Comanche law, it is necessary not to talk about "law" when doing field work with the Comanches, but rather, through utilization of the case-law method of legal recording and analysis, to accumulate a sizeable body of case histories of dispute situations from which the regularity of legal patterns can be abstracted.[2]

Before presenting the facts of their law, it is necessary to describe the nature of the Comanche state.

642 The basic principle of Comanche political organization was the constitutional separation of civil and military leadership. For a warlike people this separation was quite remarkable, although, of course, it was a general North American Indian practice for which the Comanches cannot be singled out for credit.

●622 The peace chief was known as *paria*:βo and each family encampment had its *paria*:βo, whom we shall call either "peace chief" or "headman." There was reluctance on the part of the Comanches to accord him formal recognition, but genuine recognition of his powers was reflected in the attention given to his advice and in the general subordination to his influence. It was one of these family headmen who was elevated to the position of head peace chief of the band; the remainder of the chiefs functioned as an advisory council for the band as a whole and at the same time maintained their positions as family headmen to their own group of followers. The chief, or headman, was chairman, so to speak, of the group. He was *primus inter pares*.

There is no explicit way of saying how a man became a civil

[1] Ralph Linton in S. S. Sargent and M. W. Smith (eds.) *Culture and Personality*, 123.

[2] Cf. Hoebel, *The Political Organization and Law-Ways of the Comanche Indians*, 181.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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chief. When asked, "How did you *select* your peace chiefs?" That's It, misunderstanding the phrasing of the question, answered with a touch of annoyance, "We did not *elect* them. We were not like you white people, who have to have an election every four years to see who is going to be your leader. A peace chief just got that way." His idea was echoed quite independently by Kills Something, who said, "No one made him such; he just got that way."

A peace chief rose to his position of leadership by combining generosity, kindness, evenness of temper, wisdom in council, and knowledge of his territory with good sense and the ability to speak persuasively on matters at issue. The man whose advice was most consistently followed was a peace chief for his group. He emerged gradually as a leader, and when his ability to influence his group was surpassed by that of another man, he ceased to be its *paria:βo*. Another had taken his place. The position was not competitively sought, at least not openly, for aggressive behavior was not part of the pattern of action of the man who was acceptable to the people as a peace chief. He epitomized the ideal of order and tranquility, not strife.

Josiah Gregg observed a tendency for sons of chiefs to acquire the position with more than average frequency, but explained that it was not due to any established rule of hereditary succession or legal pattern, but rather that it resulted from the fact that sons of chiefs, by virtue of the training and example set by their fathers and the expectancy of high standards within their families, attained the qualities of the chieftain. Competition was open, and the office was granted on performance solely.[3] Our own data confirm Gregg's penetrating perception. Here we see the roots of the hereditary principle as it can arise in any society. We would add that not only are the sons of chiefs more apt to act in the chiefly pattern, but the chief is merged to some extent in his family, and people get used to looking to that family for leadership. The son, who is identified with the father, tends to become the focus of leadership expectancies.

The authority of a peace chief, as has already been indicated, lasted only so long as he was able to maintain it. His position was more nominal than positive, more advisory than compulsive. The man made the office and not the office the man; he perforce relied

[3] Gregg, *op. cit.*, 343.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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622 more upon personal influence than upon delegated authority. In addition to the qualities of kindness, generosity, and wisdom in tribal affairs, physical fitness, a record for dash and daring, valor, and firmness, whether in camp or in battle, were also desirable characteristics of such leaders, but were not absolutely prerequisite to the attainment of office.

While it was not necessary for a man to have a war record to become a peace chief, it was not uncommon in later years for a war leader to achieve that rank. Certainly one who had attained leadership by personal bravery and exhibitions of courage and skill, either in the chase or on the field of battle, had added prestige. The peace chief was usually a man whose raiding days were over, although he might occasionally take to the warpath, designating someone to act in the capacity of civil chief during his absence.

When a man emerged as a civil chief, he had become a kind of revered patriarch. To all the band he was "father." The People were his "children." Although he wisely refrained at times from intervening in disputes, there were times when his judicious words brought satisfaction to both parties. Judge he was not, but mediator he seems to have been at times. It was in situations where the problem was a question of what ought to be done that the civil chief was important. That his advice was followed means no more than that his ideas appeared to be right and proper. He spoke the custom. Under no circumstances did a civil chief have the power to order an adjustment to be made. He had no power over the life of any member of the tribe. His influence was limited to internal and civil matters only. No peace chief had authority to prevent by force a war party from taking the trail. His only really definite power was that of deciding the time and place of camp moving.[4] The chief who proved tactless, cowardly, or inefficient would soon be supplanted; but the readjustment would take place gradually and by common consent rather than by formal procedure. Should the chief disgrace himself by an act of cowardice or maladministration, the band might quickly depose him and elevate another.

[202] An important peace chief had his personal herald or camp crier, who served as the chief's mouthpiece in announcing the daily news And comments of the chief.

[4] Informants: Kills Something; That's It.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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and comments of the chief. Each chief kept a staff of young men to 622 ●
serve him as aides and counselors. These young men protected their chief at all hazards; they risked their lives to rescue his body from the enemy, for it was a great honor to be chosen as a bodyguard to a civil chief. It was customary in the larger camps to send two of these young men out each day to circle the countryside looking for signs of enemies in the vicinity.

There is some difference of opinion as to the relative power of civil and war chiefs. The bulk of the evidence indicates that the head civil chief was superior to the war chief in theory, but that if the civil chief was aged and decrepit and the war chief vigorous and popular, the authority of the civil chief would be more theoretical than real.

Important policies were determined in council. In theory, at least, 623
the council was supreme, but its decisions were often indefinite. Generally the majority made little effort to impose its will on the minority, for, as in most Indian tribes, it was thought that agreement should be unanimous. The council was composed of all the old men of the tribe who had shown exceptional ability as warriors, leaders, or guides. As in the selection of chiefs, there was no formal procedure for admission; one "just got that way" because of his achievements. During the later period the authority of the counselors might be indicated by the "sun-rayed" buffalo robe dropping regally from the shoulders, even on a hot day, and by the feather war bonnet with its plumed train worn at times by members whose military achievements entitled them to wear it.

Within the council, experience and rank were usually given preference. The talking was done principally by the older men—those with the greatest experience. After the elders had stated their views, middle-aged men expressed theirs, and even younger men might speak a few words. Boys were generally allowed to attend the meetings, but only as respectful listeners. For them to intrude opinions in weighty matters was to invite scorn and ridicule; consequently, they maintained silence. They learned by watchful listening. If either the young men or the boys were called upon to speak, they did so with moderation and with a feeling of pride that they should be so honored. They wished to prove themselves first by action, then by

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
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own men. It is safe to say that the wild Comanches never kept a treaty and in the matter of treaty breaking some excellent examples were set by their white neighbors.[13]

The records available—and they are exceedingly scant and unsatisfactory—indicate that the political institutions of the Comanches were meager and poorly defined. Each band had a head civil chief and a head war chief, selected by the council of chiefs and leading men. In this connection I may state that I have never seen any satisfactory account of the manner in which chiefs were selected, or any definition of just what constituted a chief. It appears that heredity was one consideration but not the only matter of determining the status of a man in the tribe. Absolutism and the idea of divine right found little consideration in a Comanche camp. The chief or head man who proved tactless, cowardly, or inefficient would soon be supplanted; but this readjustment would likely take place gradually and by common consent rather than by formal procedure.

In all matters, even war, the head civil chief was superior to his war chief, but if the civil chief was aged and decrepit and the war chief vigorous and popular this civil superiority would be more theoretical than real. Verily, among the Comanches the man made the office and not the office the man. However, the war chief was apt to be the son, natural or adopted, of the head civil chief; and the most insolent Comanche brave had respect for the council of his elders.[14]

In theory, at least, the council was supreme, but its decisions were often indefinite and left each chief or head man a large measure of freedom of action. Generally the majority made little effort to impose its will on the minority.

During the later period, custom and the concensus of opinion, public opinion, we might call it, were practically the only sanctions behind Comanche law. However, it is likely that before the tribe

13. The Spaniards often commented on the difficulty of holding the Comanches to treaties. See The Baron de Ripperda to the Viceroy, August 28, 1772, in Bolton's De Mezieres, as cited, I, 342. The Anglo-Americans found that this problem increased with the passing of the years.

14. These statements represent my own opinions based on extensive reading and study in both Spanish and English sources. The tribal practices in these matters varied if we are to reconcile the different conflicting accounts. Josiah Gregg gives the matter some consideration. See Commerce of the Prairies (New York, 1845), 306-307, in R. G. Thwaite's Early Western Travels, XX, 342-343.

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
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622 became demoralized through contact with the white race and the desperate struggle for existence this brought about, the chiefs exercised more authority.[15] Cases of the formal arraignment and
622 trial of a warrior or chief, were exceedingly rare, if such ever
627 occurred; for the writer has never discovered a well authenticated record of such a procedure. A chief or leading brave might lash
[578] a boy or woman, but to strike another brave or chief generally meant a feud or civil war. Differences between tribesmen were settled by those directly concerned or by the relatives of the slain party. Of course, the law of an eye for an eye prevailed, but generally the heart of the offended party could be softened by judicious gifts. Generally the chiefs could make the men behave while they were in their presence and most men followed the admonition of their elders and leaders as a matter of course.

595 Polygamy was common, but before the advent of the white race
684 and its demoralizing influence on the savages the chastity of Comanche women rated high. During the period of Anglo-American relations it was not uncommon for a woman to run away from her husband in company with a spouse more to her liking. Traditional Comanche law provided that in such cases the offended husband might punish the woman by cutting off her nose, but this horrible practice was not always followed. In at least some cases the husband took back his erring spouse and rejoiced in his good fortune at being able to recover her.

221 For sustenance the Comanches depended almost entirely on game,
224 particularly the buffalo. These animals were generally hunted on horseback and brought down with the lance or shot with arrows at close range. Dependable authorities state that at times the Indians would drive the arrows completely through the carcass of the animal.[16] The natural tendency was for the bands to follow the buffaloes in their northward and southward migration, which practice made a sedentary existence impossible. At certain seasons, when the animals were fat, the hunt became a tribal affair and the slaughter of the great beasts took the shape of a cooperative

15. It is Mooney's opinion that the authority of the Kiowa chiefs suffered a sharp decline as a result of the advent of the white race and it is likely that the same thing occurred among the Comanches. See the Kiowa Indian Calendar, as cited, 223.

16. See Marcy, Exploration of Red River, as cited, 98.

20: Wallace H-4,5 (1945) 1953 NO6 Comanche NO6

ing to more than $166,000 had been made under the provisions of the act. By this means many of the young Comanches are being induced to utilize their allotments. The loans were being repaid on schedule in 1945.[26]

The government policy of making farmers of the Indians has not succeeded as well as might be desired. The Indians have not become farmers in great numbers, many preferring to lease their land rather than use it themselves. They cultivated little more than 10 per cent of the trust lands in 1945. The trust system is fast creating a new problem. With the increase in the number of heirs, the tracts become too small for economic efficiency. Consequently, the heirs tend to lease the land and divide the rentals. Yet, among the Comanches there are a number of excellent farmers. There should be more and more as young people, leaving public schools with training in vocational agriculture, seek to find a place in the new society.

In general, the economic condition of the Comanches in the early 1940's was good. The 1600 Indian families of the Kiowa-Comanche Agency for the fiscal year 1944 had an estimated total income of $2,452,897,[27] or about $1533 per family. Since there were no land or tax payments and likely only very small installments on home and improvements to deduct, the amount compared favorably with that of other rural families of the South and Southwest.

A fairly regular income extending over a period of years has enabled the Comanches to build and furnish comfortable homes, erect good barns, and to make other improvements. In 1876 the agency built homes for the leading chiefs who were friendly to the government. Although the owner of a new home may have camped in the yard and used the house to shelter his stock, he was proud of it for it enhanced his prestige. Children enjoyed whooping in the empty rooms

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26. Scott R. Moore (director Kiowa-Comanche Agency loans and farm loans) to Wallace, personal interview, June 12, 1945.

27. McCown to Wallace, personal interview, June 12, 1945. The income for the year was broken down thus: farming, $491,479; leases, $830,800; social security assistance, $22,644; relief, $5,230; wages, $907,168 (1943); service men dependent allotments, $184,100; miscellaneous, $2,500.

20: Wallace H-4,5 (1945) 1953 NO6 Comanche NO6

to hear the echoes, and one boy asked his mother to make him a bed in the fireplace that he might look up the chimney at the stars. Only 27 Comanche families were living in houses in 1886, and in 1901 the majority of the 3,713 Indians of the reservation lived in tents, tipis, and in small boxed houses along the streams. Water was obtained from running streams and bedding was filthy; there were no screens on the houses, no toilets, and no effort was made to have clean, wholesome food.

After allotments were made, home building increased rapidly. The Indians received payment for their ceded lands and realized that they must cease to wander. White neighbors soon had homes on the tracts they had taken and this stimulated a desire on the part of some families to imitate. It has been stated previously that whites who leased Indian lands for a five-year period were required to erect and leave a three-room house on each allotment. Each year new houses went up; in 1930 twenty-one were built at an average cost of $1,636.22. By that time 90 per cent of the Indian families had good frame homes with sanitary toilets and other outbuildings.[28]

The homes compare to an advantage with the rural homes of white neighbors. Superintendent Buntin in his 1930 report estimated that the value of home furniture averaged slightly more than $300. A few Comanche homes presently are large and clean, are beautifully carpeted and furnished, and have running water, gas, electricity, and occasionally a good library. Since 1930 few families have lived in tipis or tents. But partly due to the depression and later war-time restrictions and partly due to the increasing number of landless heirs, home construction has not kept pace with the increase in the number of families. Since young married couples no longer have land and lease-money, they tend to live with parents.

The Extension Service has sought to improve the standards of home life. It enrolled 525 new members in Indian wo-

28. Buntin, op. cit., ann. II, 50, 51.

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche 06
Texas

[ca. 1818]

175 628 tion of country which custom seems to have appropriated to its more special use and occupancy.

621 622 175 These three great national parties, are subdivided into captaincies or villages, to each of which is appointed a chief, whose distinction seems to consist rather in name than authority. His name however, gives title to the flying village, and is useful in this respect, as some sign of discrimination

621 175 is necessary, and they can derive none from locality. These subdivisions are various and contingent, each member being at liberty to withdraw from one village and unite with another, as caprice or convenience may dictate.

175 221 [231] As the Comanchees do not cultivate the ground, but derive their subsistence from the spontaneous productions of nature, and chiefly from the animal kingdom, they are necessarily migratory, and obliged to change their encampment every ten or fifteen days. The scarcity of game, which is soon taught to avoid their dangerous neighborhood, and the speedy exhaustion of convenient pasturage, which is indispensable to the subsistence of their large herds of mules and horses, are the principal reasons for such frequent removals. When about to abandon a position, they generally

175 202 fire the grass, to give intelligence of their decampment to absentees;—smoke is likewise employed as a telegraph to announce the return of a war party. It is not uncommon to see, at the same time, 8 or 10 of these signals darkening the horizon, and rearing their columns in gloomy grandeur, to the vertex of a serene and brilliant atmosphere.

175 643 The three parties collectively acknowledge one head or grand Chief, who is selected from either party. His appointment is indefinite as to duration and extent of authority, the latter depending more on the force of his personal char-

175 [642] [671] [692] acter, than on the investments of office. Indeed a positive official authority, is not recognized in their crude system of government. They have but few traditionary laws, and these, they are not always capable of enforcing. Compulsion is seldom exercised on a refractory culprit; and when imperious circumstances require it to be done, it is effected by a convention of chiefs, whose personal influences become auxiliary to an otherwise impotent authority.

22: Dacus Q-3 (no date) 1960 NO6 Comanche NO6
(ca. 1870)

[ca. 1870]

The husband may repudiate his wife or wives at any time, and take back his presents. The wife too, for some causes, may rebel against her tyrant lord, and leave off serving him. This course on the part of a Comanche wife, covers the husband with such disgrace that it can only be removed by killing someone—the first person he may happen to meet is made the victim. It nearly always happens that he first meets with his truant wife, or some near friend of hers, first after suffering the great disgrace, and, of course, he proceeds to slay her, or the vicarious relative.

IF THE COMANCHE can be said to live under any government, it may be set down as a radical democracy. The war chiefs are elected, on occasions of war, by the council of warriors. Their authority is only countenanced and their commands obeyed while hostilities continue. In peace, their authority is merely that derived from their wealth and prowess. The Comanches honor courage and skill in war, and the successful warrior is generally made a chief of some band. There is no unity in the tribe. Besides the seven sub-tribes into which they are divided, each of the seven is made up of small parties, each of which has a leader. In many respects the autonomy of the Comanche tribe differs from any other North American Indians. In most respects, the tribal government is very much the same as found among Xicarillo, Mescaleros, and other wandering Apaches, to which family it is claimed they are nearly related. But in two or three important particulars their method or system of government is entirely distinct from and wholly unlike that of any other people.

When a chief or prominent warrior wishes to organize a warlike expedition, he takes his yellow shield, puts on his eagle plumes, smears war-paint over his face, and assuming the weapons borne by warriors, he rides at a furious pace among the lodges, chanting his war-song as he goes. Any warrior who has taken two scalps may thus organize a marauding expedition, and no authority of chiefs or councils can prevent it. If there are warriors willing to join him they immediately mount their ponies, armed and equipped, and follow the warrior, who first declared war. Their chant is united with his, and thus a war party is made up. But it is not often that the entire band declares for war. The promoter of the war may be a simple warrior, without any authority whatever. For that particular expedition he may be chosen chief, or they may select another to lead them. When going against an enemy the commands of the chiefs are generally obeyed with alacrity. In peaceful seasons they have virtually no chief, or rather every venerable warrior among them is a chief, whose

22: Dacus Q-3 (no date) 1960 NO6 Comanche NO6
(ca. 1870)

622 624 554 authority is measured by the amount of wealth he may possess and his reputation for courage and skill in war.

624 701 The authority of their war-chiefs often terminates at the conclusion of a single expedition, their official term expiring by limitation.

623 Once a year they have a general council, at which they settle disputes between rival warriors, make regulations and discuss matters pertaining to the welfare of the people. In this council all warriors are entitled to participate, which means, all the grown up men of the tribe. Occasionally [622] a warrior of great wealth, that is the owner of many ponies, and of great personal prowess, will exercise a sort of chieftaincy for many years together. But such instances are rare.

623 203 The council frame certain rules, sanctioned by custom, and not in contravention to the will of the majority, and these are proclaimed by a chief man, who rides among the lodges, pausing at convenient points to recite the law in the hearing of all the people.

673 685 Theft, adultery and murder are the cardinal crimes, and for the punishment of these offences, custom has established precedents which have all the authority of a written code. For the first, the offender may satisfy justice by restitution and additional gifts. The second is a crime which, 684 according to Comanche law, men are incapable of committing. The woman guilty of this offense may be punished by castigation, mutilation, or the infliction of the death penalty, at the will of the husband. Her paramour, 682 however, if disposed, can placate the husband by presents. For murder, the penalty is death. The friends and relatives of the victim would disgrace themselves by compounding the felony. They are constituted the avengers, and invariably put to death the criminal, if they can find him. 673 These are about all the offenses cognizable by the Comanche code.

538 THE COMANCHES ARE GREAT STORY-TELLERS. In the mild autumn evenings they gather about the lodges in groups of five or six, and each one endeavors to surpass the others in marvelous stories, either of his own 538 adventures or those of some other person. They have a series of fables, 177 probably obtained from the Spanish Jesuit missionaries, who it is known visited them almost two centuries ago, which they term the "Talks of the [797] Liar." The Comanche name for *liar* is *esop*, which considering the striking [175] similarity between the "Talks of the *Esop*-Liar," and the fables of the Greek confirms me in the opinion that a majority of the lodge-fire stories of the Comanches are but modified versions of the fables familiar to every school-boy who is set to learn another language than his own. In these fables the fawn is substituted for the lamb, the bear for the lion, the coyote

23: Cabello y Robles G-3 (1778-1786) 1961
NO6 Comanche NO6
Eastern Comanche

[ca. 1786]

175 customarily situated across the river that some call the
131 *Colorado* (Red) and others the *Rio de la Empalizada* which
133 flows to Natchitoches in order to empty into the Mississippi;
from their settlements [on the Red River] they move about to the headwaters of the Brazos de Dios, which are one hundred leagues apart from one another; in this interval they are accustomed to make their residence at a place they call
175 the *Gran Salina* [Large Salt]. There they provide them-
439 selves with this commodity in order to barter with the
317 *Taboayazes* [*Taovayas*] and *Guachitas* [*Wichitas*] who, because they lack salt, esteem it very much.

175 FIFTH: What Are the Names of the Captains That
622 Govern Them?
624
[643] The names of the captains that I have been able to acquire notice of are in the First Class, El Cota de Maya, or Camisa de Fierro[1]; the second, Cabeza Rapada. Those of the Second Class are El Lobito, El Sorrillo, Guiracaraco, El Guaguanguas, La Boca Partida, El Español, El Surdo, and El Manco. I have not been able to inquire the names of the other three or four who are of the second class.

SIXTH. What Distinguished Those in Authority?

[643] The chiefs with the most authority and following known among the Eastern Comanche Indians are in the first class, el Camisa de Fierro, or Cota de Maya, and in the second, la Cabeza Rapada, there being ten or twelve that are between those of the second class and subject to the two aforesaid [first class chiefs].

175 SEVENTH: How Did They Gain Their Authority, by
643 Election or by Inheritance?
623
555 The command and superiority established by the two

[113] 1. For further details about Cota de Maya (Coat of Mail), also called
[551] Ecueracapa (Leather Cape), whose Comanche name was Contatanacapara, see Alfred B. Thomas, *Forgotten Frontiers* (Norman, 1932), 298-316.

24: Richardson H-4 (no date) 1929 NO6 Comanche NO6
(1854-1859) Texas

mate relations with the Penatekas or Southern bands. Along Red River and the Canadian were the Tanimas, Nokonies and Kotsotekas, to the north were the Yamarikas and in the plains region were the fierce Kwaharies. Associated with these northern bands were the Kiowas, fierce and powerful. Parties from these different bands frequently visited the reservation, coming as friends or lurking near as enemies as best suited their purposes. Naturally the going and coming of these wild kinsmen and their occasional presence at or near the reservation made it very difficult for the agents to control their wards. Furthermore, in their raids against the Texas settlements and the North Mexican states these parties often passed near the reservation. This, according to Agent Leeper, was done both to steal additional horses from the reserve Indians and to direct the attention of the pursuers to those Indians in order that they might be charged to the innocent while the guilty made their escape. Indeed the Indians of the reservation frquently suffered severe losses of horses at the hands of these marauders.[11] During the last years of the reservation there developed an estrangement between its inhabitants and their wild kinsmen and at times the wards felt that their lives were insecure, although the agency was near by and the military post but two miles away. In May, 1856, Ka-tem-e-see took his boys out of school in order to keep them near him and better protect them from the wrath of the marauders of the north. By this time the chief had lost his enthusiasm for the wild Indians and on one occasion said that he did not care if the troops killed them all.[12]

On at least one occasion a lawless visitor came near causing a general revolt. One Santa Anna, a notoriously bad Indian, came and put up in Ka-tem-e-see's cabin. Since this was the only cabin on the reservation perhaps the insolent fellow felt that lodging accommodations were poor enough and he proposed to take the best. It was even rumored that he planned to supersede Ka-tem-e-see and make himself chief of the reservation. The chief ordered this Indian and his companion, a Nokoni Comanche, to leave; but they informed him that they were resting from their arduous journey and did not propose to leave until it suited their conven-

11. Leeper's Report, December 31, 1857. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

12. J. Shirley, employee at Barnard's trading house at the reservation, to C. E. Barnard, May 6, 1858. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy. Also, Leeper to Neighbors, February 2, 1858, Ibid.

24: Richardson H-4 (no date) 1929 NO6 Comanche NO6
(1854-1859) Texas

626 lowers returned from a raid to Mexico with twelve stolen horses,
623 a council of chiefs was called to consider the matter and the culprits were informed that if they repeated the act they would all be shot.[25] However, it must be said that the exercise of authority generally stopped with admonition and an influential warrior had little to fear from a council composed of his fellow warriors.
622 Chief Ka-tem-e-see was given the use of a cabin and was paid thirty
[657] dollars per month to act as head chief. From all accounts he took
[434] his position quite seriously and worked faithfully to lead his people
[166] aright. In one report it is stated that several females had recently deserted the reservation because of punishment he had inflicted upon them. Apparently the braves were dealt with more tactfully.

Breaking Up the Reservation

657 Naturally the people of Texas had expected that the establishment of the reservations whereby the Indians were given the opportunity to maintain a comfortable existence under government supervision would improve frontier Indian conditions. But this
648 hope proved to be in vain. The various bands of Southern Comanches who refused to settle, together with parties of their northern kinsmen and the Lipans and small parties of other tribes continued to harass the settlements to such an extent as to call forth protests from many sources. Conditions not only did not improve but, according to the accounts of that day, grew worse from year to year, especially after 1856.

From the very beginning, and for good reasons, some of the frontier citizens had come to regard the reservations as a source
648 of trouble. It is true that the agents did their best to control their
657 Indians and they certainly never tolerated theft when they could prevent it. However, with Indians coming and going in such promiscous fashion it was utterly impossible for the agents to know just what their wards were doing. Although some of the frontiersmen made allegations to the contrary, there is overwhelming evidence to the effect that ranchmen who came to hunt their lost or stolen stock were extended every aid and courtesy by the agents and Ka-tem-e-see. They rarely ever found their property there,

[113] 25. Neighbor's report, September 16, 1858, Thirty-fifth Congress, Second Session, Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 1, Vol. I, p. 324.

29: Hoebel E-4,5 (1933) 1969 N06 Comanche N06

Out of apparent weakness emerged the wildest marauding brigandage. The Comanches whipped and drove the Apaches from the southern Plains. They stalemated the Spanish. They decimated the pueblo of Pecos. They ranged far below the Rio Grande on slave- and booty-taking raids into Old Mexico. They blocked the westward expansion of the Texas frontier for several decades. They became "The Spartans of the Prairies." They were rough, tough, aggressive and militant individualists. They gave trouble to all their enemies and to themselves. And in their way, out of the nothingness of Shoshone legal backgrounds they shaped a crude but effective system of law to cope with the clashes of individual with individual within their ranks.

. . .

The basic postulates of the Comanche way of life are simple and few. They express a strong individualism and man-to-man aggressiveness in the following terms:

Postulate I. The individual is supreme in all things.

Postulate II. The self of the male is realized in striving for accumulated war honors, horses, and women.

Postulate III. Women are sexually and economically desirable but are inferior and subordinate to men.

Corollary 1. The sex rights of a husband to his wife are limited to himself and his brothers.

Postulate IV. The strongest social tie is that of brother to brother.

Postulate V. Sexual relations between kin (incest) constitutes subhuman behavior.

Postulate VI. War is essential to the prosperity of the tribe and the individual self-expression of the male.

Postulate VII. The great spirits (Sun and Earth) have powers of "legal" judgment.

Postulate VIII. Each Comanche ought to cooperate with others and help them in their life's activities.

Corollary 1. Altruism and sharing of goods is socially desirable.

Corollary 2. The killing of a fellow tribesman is not permissible.

Postulate IX. Horses, especially favorite horses, have quasi-human personalities.

The simple needs of Comanche society did not impose any great social pressure for governmental controls, and the high value placed upon individual freedom of action also worked to hold government at a minimum. If a Comanche had been invited to subscribe to a political slogan, he would have given his assent to the proposition that "that government is best which governs least." So fully was this precept expressed in a lack of political action that That's It, one of the most acute of our Comanche informants,

29: Hoebel E-4,5 (1933) 1969 NO6 Comanche NO6

622 [642] in commenting on the band headmen, or peace chiefs, remarked, "I hardly known how to tell about them; they never had much to do except to hold the band together." The headman was a magnet at the core of the band, but his influence was so subtle that it almost defies explicit description. He worked through precept, advice, and good humor, expressing his wisdom through well-chosen words and persuasive common sense. He was not elected to office or even chosen. "He just got that way." His role and status were only slightly more institutionalized than were those of the Eskimo headman. In the making of any important decisions of group policy all men were free to have their say. Yet among them all, the wiser old head, whose time-tested judgment the people respected, was the leader. In matters of daily routine, such as camp moving, he merely made the decisions himself, announcing them through a camp crier. Anyone who did not like his decision simply ignored it. If in time a good many people ignored his announcements and preferred to stay behind with some other man of influence, or perhaps to move in another direction with that man, the chief had then lost his following. He was no longer chief, and another had quietly superseded him.

624 555 701 721 War chiefs were outstanding fighters whose accumulated records of honored deeds were tangible evidence of their prestige status. Any Comanche was free to initiate a raid or organize a war party—if he could muster a band of followers. The Comanches were chronically at war with the Ute, Pawnee, Apache, Osage, Tonkaway, and sundry other tribes. In later days, the whites of Texas and the Mexicans on both sides of the Rio Grande were fair game. War, for the Comanches, was certainly a national pastime, if not the conscious practice of a national political policy. We suspect it was both. But so far as it was a national policy, it was not explicitly directed [555] by a governing military or political body. It was a matter of individual motivation, prepared by training since infancy and spurred by a social system that gave rich psychological rewards to the men who were bravest in the face of the enemy or most successful in running off the horses of hostile tribes or the horses and cattle of Texas ranchers.

701 624 On the raid the leader of the war party—the man who had organized it—had temporary dictatorial powers such as a peace chief never enjoyed. He determined the objectives of the raid; he appointed scouts, cooks and water carriers; he set the camping places and the route of march; he divided the booty, if booty there was. In all his directives he was implicitly obeyed. If anyone seriously objected, he was free to leave the party and go his own way. Success on the raid demanded tough leadership, and the followers of a war chief submitted to it. Yet so strong was the Comanche sense of individual freedom that at any point a man could pick up his arrows and go home.

624 In view of their basic values of individual supremacy and the related